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Ethnocentrism Distorts Foreign Policy
Is America's world view dangerously limited?

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How are blacks faring?

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Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

The stunning victory of Virginia's new lieutenant-governor-elect, Democrat L. Douglas Wilder, in the November 5th elections contains a number of notable lessons for blacks, the Democratic party, and the nation.

For the nation and blacks, Wilder's election can be viewed as a clear barometer of progress. The first black elected to statewide office in Virginia since Reconstruction, he represents a shattering of Virginia's old image as the "capital" of the Jim Crow South. Virginia voters, in electing Wilder by a 52 percent majority, obviously made their choice based on his excellent leadership record while serving as a state senator for the last 16 years. Although race remained a factor, it was only a secondary factor—a fact which speaks well of both Doug Wilder and the Virginia electorate. In fact, Wilder's own personal refusal to position himself as a symbolic black candidate was the cornerstone of a brilliant campaign strategy that was at once bold and low-key.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of his campaign was the early decision to have him meet thousands of mostly-white Virginia voters face to face during a 95-county, 300-city tour through the state. This bold move was counterbalanced by the low-key, issues-oriented message he delivered and the support he generated from some of the state's more conservative Democratic leaders such as House Speaker A.L. Philpott; from the Fraternal Order of Police; from moderates like Governor Charles Robb; and from the state's liberal leaders. As Wilder's campaign manager, Paul Goldman, concluded, Wilder's strategy was to make voters ask, "Why *not* vote for Wilder," rather than "Why should I vote for Wilder." Thus, Wilder persistently emphasized his qualifications and experience for the office of lieutenant governor.

Wilder did not campaign aggressively among blacks, preferring to gain recognition and support in areas where he was least known. Instead, he sent surrogates to campaign in black precincts. The strategy paid off. He won 97 percent of the black vote and 46 percent of the white vote. His largest percentages of the white vote came from areas with very small black populations—e.g., northern Virginia, where the population is approximately 16 percent black, and southwest Virginia (Appalachia), where the population is only 2 percent black.

As for the Democratic Party, well, obviously it is alive and kicking in Virginia, despite the dire predictions of the doubting Thomases when Wilder won the Democratic nomination. Many people attribute the Democratic sweep in Virginia (Gerald Baliles for governor, Mary Sue Terry for attorney general, and Wilder for lieutenant governor) to the overwhelming popularity and persuasiveness of outgoing Virginia Governor Charles Robb.

Robb is now being touted as a national leader within the Democratic Party and as a possible candidate for president or vice president in 1988.

But at least as far as Wilder is concerned, credit also should go to the brilliant campaign he and his campaign manager waged, to fairminded Virginia voters, and to the ineptness of his opponent.

One down-side of the Wilder victory is that it was achieved with a black voter turnout that was lower than in the gubernatorial election of 1981. Virginia's black voting-age population makes up 18 percent of the total electorate in the state. Yet, despite the presence of Wilder on the ticket, black turnout in the election is estimated to have been as low as 12 percent of the total vote—down from 15 percent in 1981.

The challenge for black electoral politics in the late 1980s is to produce more victories at all levels of government, but especially at the state level. Wilder demonstrated that this is possible where a candidate is well qualified and runs a very sophisticated campaign. But to build on Wilder's victory in other places and for other offices, blacks must exercise their right to vote more fully. They must also get more involved in political parties and campaigns and in the central political debates of the day. And blacks should encourage friends, family, and colleagues to register and vote. It is still all too easy to lose elections by succumbing to apathy. Political power is amassed by registering and voting and by passing the word to others to do the same.

Eddie N. Williams
President

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Black Politics: The Year in Review

by Linda F. Williams

(The author is a senior research associate at the Joint Center.)

In 1985, black political candidates won some striking victories, and the black vote was decisive in some elections. In other elections, although the black vote was not decisive, it was noteworthy. Taken as a whole, the elections gave no reason for one to believe that massive shifts in abiding party loyalties were occurring, especially among blacks.

Looking ahead to 1986, on several grounds it seems that the Republicans may lose their majority in the Senate and that more blacks may be elected to the House of Representatives than in any previous year.

The Success of Black Candidates

In the 1985 elections, black candidates for public office had mixed political fortunes, with some candidates winning and some losing. As a whole, however, they made progress: more than 300 blacks were either reelected or newly elected to public office.

The biggest breakthrough came with the election of Democratic State Senator L. Douglas Wilder as Virginia's lieutenant governor (see page 2 of this issue of *Focus*). Other important victories included the reelection of black mayors in three of the nation's largest cities (Democrats Thomas Bradley in Los Angeles, Andrew Young in Atlanta, and Coleman Young in Detroit). Black mayors were also reelected in several medium-sized cities, including Charlotte, North Carolina, and Hartford, Connecticut, where Harvey Gantt and Thirman L. Milner, respectively, defeated their Republican challengers.

The reelections of all these black mayors reflects the growing advantage of incumbency. In the 1960s and early 1970s, most big-city mayors failed to be reelected for second terms, but today mayors often serve more than one term.

Where blacks were newly elected to office, they tended to win open seats; for example, New York City Clerk David Dinkins was elected to the open seat for Manhattan borough president, and Ron Sims of King County (Seattle), Washington, was elected to an open seat as a county councilman in that state (the first black to hold the position). Where blacks were challenging incumbents, they tended to be defeated. For example, George Arthur in Buffalo, Herman Farrell in New York, and Norman Rice in Seattle all lost to incumbent mayors.

The Black Vote

Behind the general success of black candidates in 1985 was the continued cohesiveness of the black vote. In some places, however, black voter turnout was not as high as had been expected. In the New York City primary, for example, only 38 percent of black registered voters went to the polls, despite the presence of many black candidates on the ballot. And in Virginia, despite Wilder's presence on the ticket, black turnout in the general election was estimated at 12 percent of the total turnout—3 percent less than in the previous gubernatorial election.

Explanations for the decrease in black turnout in Virginia range from the bad weather that disrupted traditional get-out-the-vote activities in black precincts to the Democratic party's tactical decision to avoid making any special appeals to blacks. Whatever the reason, stronger efforts to mobilize Virginia's black voters will be necessary in the future.

Despite low turnout in some places, black voters were decisive in a number of key races—most notably in the elections of Wilder and his gubernatorial running mate, Gerald Baliles, in Virginia, and in the reelection of Mayor Kathy Whitmire in Houston.

In several elections, although the black vote was not decisive, its cohesiveness was noteworthy for another reason. Heavily Democratic since 1964, in 1985 black voters heavily supported two victorious Republican incumbents. Sixty percent of black voters cast their ballots for the reelection of Republican Governor Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey, and 85 percent of black precincts went for Republican Mayor George Voinovich of Cleveland.

In sum, the impact of the black vote in 1985 and the willingness of blacks to vote for moderate Republicans in some areas show that black voters are a potentially significant constituency for either party.

The Realignment/Dealignment Debate

The results of the elections of 1985 in general and, in particular, the fact that blacks voted for Republicans in New Jersey and Cleveland have refueled the debate about realignment and dealignment.

"Realigning elections" are elections that mark the shift of long-standing party loyalties among groups and make a previously minority party into a majority party that dominates elections for a generation or more. Thus, a realigning election today would be one that initiated abiding Republican loyalties among groups such as organized labor, blacks, and others who had been either Democratic or indifferent to politics.

By dealignment, political scientists mean (a) a decline in the number of people who identify with or have strong commitments to either of the two parties, and (b) an increase in the proportion of people who change party identification as they shift their candidate preference.

Those who hold that a realignment is occurring tend to see the black votes for Kean and Voinovich as evidence that blacks may be joining (and helping to create) a conservative Republican majority party. Bolstering this view is the rise in Reagan's approval ratings among blacks (from 10 percent in 1982 to 27 percent in 1985, according to the Gallup poll taken in mid-October). But the kind of candidates Kean and Voinovich were, the particular nature of the Reagan approval ratings, and declining party identification among blacks actually call into question the conclusion that realignment is taking place among the electorate at large or among blacks.

The Kean and Voinovich Candidacies. Neither Kean nor Voinovich is a Reagan-style Republican. Kean, for example, is opposed to the Reagan administration's positions on issues like abortion, the ERA, the nuclear freeze, and divestiture in South Africa. A vote for Kean, who campaigned vigorously in New Jersey's black precincts and was endorsed by Coretta Scott King, can hardly be construed as a vote for Reagan's conservative social policy agenda.

Reagan Approval Ratings. Approval ratings may be an increasingly questionable yardstick, given the ex-

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Ethnocentrism Distorts Foreign Policy

by Bernard Johns

(Mr. Johns is a senior fellow at the Joint Center, on detail from the U.S. Department of State under its Pearson Fellowship Program.)

Prejudice often prevents Americans from understanding and resolving domestic problems that have racial, religious, and ethnic overtones. Not surprisingly, those same prejudices shape our view of the world beyond America's shores and can affect U.S. foreign policy in ways damaging to us as a nation. To protect U.S. interests abroad more effectively, therefore, we need to understand better how our foreign policy and our perception of other societies, particularly those in the Third World, tend to be shaped by the same biases that operate in the domestic sphere.

Understanding Other Nations

The world in which America conducts its foreign policy bristles with competition and confrontation. Nations with diverse religious, cultural, ethnic, or racial backgrounds challenge each other politically and militarily. In a world so charged with hostility, we Americans cannot protect the nation's strategic interests or play a constructive role in resolving international disputes peacefully unless we understand societies whose traditions and mores are considerably different from our own. When foreigners act in ways that generate conflict, we need to know what caused their behavior and why it took the particular form it did.

The problem, however, is that when many members of the American foreign affairs community look at political conflicts in foreign countries, and especially in the Third World, they generally perceive simply the same forces that motivate political conflict and violence in the West. Political behavior in traditional, non-white societies is often motivated by cultural, tribal, religious, racial, and ethnic factors and interests that have no obvious counterparts in Western experience—yet the American foreign affairs community most often ignores those factors and perceives only what its own assumptions and prejudices allow it to see. Judging foreign political behavior by our own value system, American analysts often fail to comprehend what is actually occurring.

Policies formulated on the basis of such distorted reasoning have contributed to several of the major setbacks the United States has encountered abroad in the past 25 years. In Vietnam, Iran, and Lebanon, for example, American attempts to understand what was happening—and to respond appropriately—failed. The main reason they failed is that American analysts and policy makers misinterpreted the history, motivations, and determination of people in other countries.

Ethnocentric Assumptions

Some of the assumptions on which American foreign policy has been based can be characterized as ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to attach superior values to one's own cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial group and to view all other groups as inferior. The particular form of ethnocentrism that reflects a sense of racial superiority is racial discrimination. This occurs within the American foreign policy community as that community goes about defining U.S. foreign policy, and it manifests itself in the attitudes of individuals, in the informal institutional culture, and in exclusionary practices.

Most directly, the individual male Anglo-Saxons who dominate the American foreign policy community tend to draw upon their stereotyped views of black, Hispanic, Asian, and other American ethnic minorities to interpret the behavior of foreigners. For example, the U.S. civil rights movement is frequently invoked in very simplistic ways to explain recent political events in South Africa. Completely disregarded are the enormous differences between the ultimate political goals of blacks in the two countries—a black South African majority that seeks to obtain political power, and a black American minority that seeks equality. Or home-grown American solutions are proposed for such complex foreign political conflicts as the current hostilities in the Middle East, where the application of Western notions of conflict resolution may be totally inappropriate.

When the interpretations or solutions of the American foreign policy community prove invalid or unworkable, Americans are perplexed and tend to conclude that foreigners are unreasonable. The consequences may be disastrous for the countries involved. In reality, of course, the actions of a foreign nation or its people do not answer to American logic but emerge from a unique history of religious, ethnic, racial, sectarian, and cultural developments within a specific geographic and historic context.

The second channel through which ethnocentric values influence American foreign policy is the institutional environment within which decisions are made. When U.S. foreign-policy makers discuss issues, the institution within which they function may itself assure adherence to an informal code of behavior in which the opinions of superiors influence the analysis that is produced, and traditional (but often inaccurate) assumptions are merely reinforced. It then becomes unthinkable for the group to reexamine its assumptions and explore the possibility that its failures in policy analysis may be closely related to stereotyped thinking that distorts reality. Within that institutional environment, ethnocentric assumptions remain unchallenged.

Finally, one of the most blatant domestic manifestations of ethnocentrism is the prejudice behind the virtual exclusion of American blacks (as well as other minorities, and women) from American foreign-policy decisionmaking bodies. The principal vehicle for entrance into the U.S. Foreign Service as a career officer is the service's written qualifying examination. Minorities and women have always been underrepresented both among those taking the exam and among those passing it. A reason for the underrepresentation was provided by a 1979 report commissioned by then-Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and written by a committee headed by Ambassador Phillip C. Habib. The report suggested that the exam might not in fact test skills necessary for work in the foreign service and might have inherent cultural biases that discriminate against minorities and women.

The consequence of racially biased ethnocentric thinking, then, is that minorities and women remain underrepresented in the senior ranks of people who analyze and formulate U.S. foreign policy. The analyses underlying our foreign policy are therefore shaped by the assumptions of a small group whose meaningful exposure to ethnic, religious, and racial minorities in

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Black Politics . . .

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tent of the gap that has opened up between approval of the president personally and support for his economic policies. In mid-October, the president was popular with 66 percent of all Americans. But whereas in early 1985 about 55 percent of all Americans approved the president on specific economic issues (unemployment, taxes, the farm problem, and the deficit), in late 1985 the figures were much lower. They ranged from the 30s to the low 40s for all Americans, and from 14 percent to 22 percent for blacks. This hardly indicates a surge of pro-Reagan policy support among anyone, let alone blacks.

Party Identification. Despite the media's concentration on the softening of black ties to the Democratic party, during the years of the Reagan presidency blacks have increasingly identified with the Democratic party. In 1972, when 68 percent of the black population was affiliated with the Democrats, 37 percent of all blacks considered themselves strong Democrats while another 31 percent considered themselves weak Democrats. By 1984, the percentage of blacks identifying themselves as Democrats had climbed to 76 percent, with 55 percent viewing themselves as strong Democrats and 21 percent as weak Democrats. During the same period, the percentage of blacks identifying themselves as independents almost doubled—from 11 percent in 1972 to 21 percent in 1984. In the post-Reagan era, probably more blacks will identify with the Republican party, but the main trend seems to be for blacks, like other Americans, to identify themselves more and more as independents and less and less as partisans. The decline of partisan identification among blacks makes it more likely that blacks will support candidates from either party who appeal to their interests.

Thus, the results of the 1985 elections indicate that dealignment, in both senses, seems to be occurring. Party identification is declining, and at the same time shifts in party identification are increasing.

The 1986 Congressional Elections

What do the 1985 elections presage for the 1986 Congressional elections? Two aspects of the 1985 vote, in particular, are likely still to be significant in 1986: Republican hopes for realignment will probably again be disappointed, and incumbency will probably continue to be an advantage, but less so in the Senate than in the House.

In the House, between 1956 and 1980, incumbents who sought reelection won 92.2 percent of the time. Nothing in 1986 is likely to change that pattern, and few, if any, observers expect the House to change hands.

In the Senate, too, incumbents have increasingly had the advantage. Whereas 10 incumbents lost in 1978 and 13 in 1980, only 2 lost in 1982 and 3 in 1984. The Republicans have a 53-47 majority in the Senate, so the advantage of incumbency should work to their benefit. But the number and distribution of Senate seats at risk may override that factor.

Barring realignment, the more seats a president's party has up for reelection, the more seats it loses—and 22 of the 34 Senate seats up for reelection in 1986 are held by Republicans. To regain control of the Senate, the Democrats need take only 4 of the 22, while keeping all of their own seats. Six Republican seats appear vulnerable—those in Florida (Paula Hawkins), South Dakota (James Abdnor), Alabama (Jeremiah Denton), Idaho (Stephen Symms), Pennsylvania (Arlen Specter), and Georgia (Mack Mattingly). Several seats being vacated by Republicans also seem vulnerable (for example, those now held by Charles Mathias of Maryland and John East of North Carolina).

Also working against incumbency is the disproportionate concentration of 1986 Senate elections in economically troubled states. Many of the states with 1986 Senate elections are experiencing local recessions. An even greater number of states in which seats are not up for election are not experiencing recessions.

Still another factor that could work against incumbency is the black vote. Three incumbents have extremely poor voting records on issues of concern to minorities. All three—Denton, Hawkins, and Mattingly—won narrowly in 1980 and all are from states with large concentrations of unregistered black voters. In these and other Senate contests, a high registration and voting rate among blacks could determine the outcome of the election.

Among the Democrats, the incumbents who may be vulnerable are Patrick Leahy (Vermont), Alan Cranston (California), and Gary Hart (Colorado), but many analysts report that the prospects of all three are improving. Both Cranston and Leahy are running in economically prosperous states and now lead in the polls. Speculation is mounting that Hart may decide not to run and will instead work on building his presidential campaign for 1988.

It is too early to use statistical forecasting models to predict the outcomes of Senate elections, but political scientists Michael Lewis-Beck and Tom W. Rice have created models in which they tested various levels of presidential popularity in combination with various levels of economic growth. On the basis of their findings, they argue that even in the scenario most favorable to the Republicans (high popularity ratings for the president and strong real growth in GNP), so many Republican incumbents are at risk that the party is almost sure to lose its Senate majority.

Black Congressional Candidates in 1986

For black congressional hopefuls, the most significant result of the elections of 1985 was the victory of Wilder in Virginia. His election should encourage more blacks to run in majority-white jurisdictions and should encourage both major parties to give greater support to black candidates. Black candidates running in majority-white congressional districts should certainly study Wilder's campaign strategy, and so should black candidates in majority-black districts (such as the Mississippi second, see below).

A number of black candidates for the U.S. House have already announced (or are studying their prospects) in majority-white districts. Among them are Faye Williams in Louisiana's eighth district (Alexandria); Wendell Holloway in Maryland's eighth district (Montgomery County); and Bennie Thayer in Maryland's fifth district (Prince George's County). Each of these candidates faces an uphill battle.

In majority-black districts, several key races to watch in 1986 are the Mississippi second (the Delta), the Georgia fifth (Atlanta), and the Maryland seventh (Baltimore).

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A Perspective on the Labor Market

by Lynn C. Burbridge

(The author is senior economist at the Joint Center.)

The end of the year is a good time to take stock of the labor market and in particular to note the relative positions of blacks and whites.

The monthly reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, make it clear that for some groups, little has changed during 1985. The data indicate that the labor market position of black men has continued to deteriorate, while that of white men has improved. The position of both black and white women also continues to improve (although unemployment rates are twice as high for black women as for white women). For white teenagers, the picture is mixed: their percentage in the labor market has increased, but so has their rate of unemployment.

In one area, however, we do see evidence of change. The participation of black teenagers in the labor force has significantly increased, and despite the greater number of black teens seeking work, their unemployment rate has stayed about the same. Nevertheless, black teenagers still have a way to go before catching up with their white counterparts.

To reach these findings, we chose two key indices—the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate—and we compared them by race, age, and sex for four dates: October of this year, October of last year, and two previous Octobers (1982 and 1979) that are useful points of comparison. (See the accompanying table.) October 1982 was a time of low economic activity; the recession of 1981-1982 would reach its lowest point in November 1982. October 1979, in contrast, was a time of high economic activity; the growth period that had started 4-1/2 years earlier would peak in January 1980. Thus, we can compare the figures for 1985 with those for last year and with those for a "bad" year (1982) and a "good" year (1979).

A note on our two indices. The labor force consists of people who are working or seeking work, and the **unemployment rate** is the percentage of unemployed people in the labor force. The **labor force participation rate** is the proportion of the total population that is in the labor force. In other words, the first index measures the situation of the people who are available for work, and the second measures the extent to which the people in a given population are in fact available. (The figures are "seasonally adjusted," which means that the raw numbers have been somewhat modified to account for fluctuations caused by seasonal events, such as changes in the weather and the opening and closing of schools. These adjustments make it easier to identify changes that specifically derive from economic factors.)

What follows is a narrative explanation of the data presented in the table.

Unemployment Rates

During the past year, unemployment rates declined for all groups except black men and white teenagers. (The rate for black men stayed about the same, and the rate for white teenagers rose.) But when the unemployment rates for October 1985 are compared with the unemployment rates for the bottom of the recession in 1982, all groups without exception show a decline. The largest decline (in percentage terms) is recorded by white men, whose unemployment rate dropped by 42 percent during the three years. The smallest decline (in percentage terms) is recorded by black teenagers, whose unemployment rate dropped by 17 percent. For white teenagers the unemployment rate dropped by 20 percent, and for all other groups it dropped by between 25 and 30 percent.

When this year's unemployment rates are compared with those of 1979 (the "good" year), however, the rates for all groups, especially black men, show an increase. The rate of unemployment for black men rose by 63 percent between 1979 and 1985 (from 8.6 to 14.0 percent). For white men (who had the largest drop in unemployment between 1982 and 1985), the rate between 1979 and 1985 increased by 38 percent. The increase for black and white women and black and white

Unemployment Rates, Labor Force Participation Rates, and Percentage Changes, 1979-1985

	Overall		Men (20+)		Women (20+)		Teenagers (16-19)	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Unemployment Rates								
Oct. 1979	11.5%	5.1%	8.6%	3.7%	10.2%	5.0%	35.1%	14.4%
Oct. 1982	20.1	9.3	19.6	8.8	16.2	7.6	47.7	21.5
Oct. 1984	15.3	6.3	13.4	5.4	13.4	5.8	40.2	15.9
Oct. 1985	15.0	6.1	14.0	5.1	12.1	5.5	39.7	17.2
Percentage Change 1979-1985*	30.4	19.6	62.8	37.8	18.6	10.0	13.1	19.4
Labor-Force Participation Rates								
Oct. 1979	62.3	64.1	77.0	80.0	56.2	50.2	40.6	61.1
Oct. 1982	61.0	64.4	74.4	79.4	56.1	52.1	37.5	57.3
Oct. 1984	62.8	64.6	75.0	78.6	58.0	53.2	40.5	56.9
Oct. 1985	62.8	65.3	74.3	78.6	58.2	54.4	42.7	58.0
Percentage Change 1979-1985*	0.8	1.9	-3.5	-1.8	3.6	8.4	5.2	-5.3

*Percentage change is the absolute difference between 1985 and 1979 divided by the amount in the base year (1979).

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

. . . Labor Market

teenagers was between 10 and 20 percent. White women, with a 10 percent change, most nearly approached their 1979 unemployment rate.

Labor Force Participation Rates

Since last year, the labor force participation rate has increased or remained the same for every group except black men, whose participation rate declined by 0.7 percentage points. Black teenagers had the largest increase, followed by white women and white teenagers. The participation rates of white men and black women remained about the same this year as last.

In comparison with 1982 (the bottom of the latest recession), participation rates rose in 1985 for all groups except white and black men, for both of whom the rates declined slightly (for white men, by 0.8 percentage points, and for black men, by 0.1 percentage points). For white and black adult women and for white teenagers, the increases ranged from 0.7 to 2.3 percentage points. For black teenagers—the group with the lowest overall participation rate—the increase between 1982 and 1985 was a dramatic 5.2 percentage points.

That increase is all the more interesting, since (at 42.7 percent) the participation rate for black teenagers is higher in 1985 than it was in 1979, our "good" reference year (when it was 40.6 percent). This represents a 5.2 percent increase between 1979 and 1985. In contrast, for white teenagers the participation rate in 1985 is 3.1 percentage points lower than it was in 1979 (for a 5.3 percent decrease between 1979 and 1985). Black teenagers still have a much lower participation rate than white teenagers, but at least their rate of participation relative to that of their white counterparts has improved.

For white and black women, as for black teenagers, participation in the labor force has increased since 1979—not surprisingly, given long-term trends in the labor force participation of women. Also consistent with long-term trends are the participation rates of white and black men (particularly black men), which declined between 1979 and 1985.

Employment is only one index of a group's relative position in the labor market. Other, equally important indices are earnings and occupational status, which we will examine in future issues of *Focus*.

Black Politics . . .

(Continued from page 5)

In the Mississippi second, black Assistant State Attorney General Mike Espy has announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination. Espy is described by most observers as "articulate," "well-versed on the issues," and "a team player." Blacks make up 53 percent of the voting-age population of this district, so if no other black candidate runs, he has an excellent chance of winning the nomination. Black candidates lost in the general elections of 1982 and 1984, however. The critical questions for the general election in this district are whether black voters will turn out in large enough numbers and whether white Democrats will support a black candidate in greater numbers than they did in the past two elections.

In Georgia's fifth district, which is 60 percent black, Representative Wyche Fowler is considering running for the Senate against Mack Mattingly. Prospective black candidates for Fowler's seat include State Senator Julian Bond, Atlanta City Councilman John Lewis, Fulton County Commissioner Reginald Eaves, and political activist Jan Douglas, all Democrats, and journalist Portia Scott on the Republican side. If Fowler does run for the Senate, one of the Democratic black candidates is almost certain to win in this district, which elected Andrew Young in 1972.

Congressman Parren Mitchell's decision to retire from Congress has made the seventh district in Maryland another race to watch. The voting-age population there is 70 percent black. Blacks who have already announced their intention to seek the Democratic nomination include political science professor Augustus Adair, Baltimore attorney A. Dwight Petit, State Representative Wendell Phillips, and Baltimore City Councilman Kweisi Mfume. It is too early to predict who will win, and much depends on whether Representative Mitchell endorses a candidate. In any event, the winner is certain to be black.

Currently 20 blacks serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. With Mitchell being replaced by a black Democrat and the other incumbents all but assured of reelection, this number will not drop after the election. Given good prospects for Espy in Mississippi and for one of the black candidates if Fowler should run for the Senate in Georgia, at least two additional blacks may be added to the House. The number of blacks in the U.S. House of Representatives would then be 22—higher than it has ever been.

Ethnocentrism . . .

(Continued from page 4)

this country has been very limited and whose perceptions of others, at home and abroad, are usually seriously flawed. This is particularly true for perceptions of the non-white, non-Western Third World.

Correcting Distortions

Distortions caused by ethnocentrism can certainly be remedied, if not eliminated. Better education can help, especially when it includes cross-cultural and ethnic studies, studies on the nature of prejudice, and (as suggested by the noted black scholar John Hope Franklin) a comprehensive history of the United States that accurately reflects the cultural, socioeconomic, and political realities of American life.

Moreover, blacks themselves can act to make a difference. The ability of any American ethnic group to influence U.S. foreign policy is directly related to its ability to influence domestic policy. As long as black Americans fail to use the ballot box to express their concerns about U.S. foreign policies that might directly affect the economic, political, or social well-being of black peoples, their concerns will generally be ignored in Washington.

By educational or political means, American policy makers may be brought to recognize the possibility that when their reasoning is flawed by prejudice, the costs to our national interest are excessive. Certainly, the history of U.S. foreign policy in the past 25 years argues for an agonizing reappraisal of assumptions that have too often been proved inaccurate. Among the significant political events that the American foreign affairs community failed to predict are the tremendous increase in Soviet defense spending in the early 1960s, the development of China's plutonium bomb, the expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt and Somalia, the 1973 Arab Israel War, China's second cultural revolution, the Iranian revolution, and the 1980 Friendship Treaty between Syria and the Soviet Union. All were unforeseen, and the unpreparedness was at least partly the result of biased, ethnocentric thinking.

David A. Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation, stressed in his 1984 presidential essay that ethnocentrism is a phenomenon we urgently need to understand:

> Despite the immense, ultimate, significance of the problems of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and conflict, these subjects are still pretty low on the world's agenda—in science, in the media, in the business community, in the churches, and in governments. The powerful sectors of society everywhere tend to be complacent about such matters and to see them fuzzily as someone else's problems far away. Avoidance and denial tend to subtitute for careful scrutiny; authority substitutes for evidence; blaming substitutes for problem solving. The capacity for wishful thinking in these matters is enormous, as is the capacity for self-justification. But the issue must be faced now in a way that it has never been before.

Hamburg's warning words are clear: "No longer have we the luxury to indulge in prejudice and in ethnocentric extremes."

Mark Your Calendar—
JCPS Annual Dinner Set for March 26

The Joint Center will hold its ninth annual dinner on March 26, 1986, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.

The national chairman of this year's event is John J. Creedon, president and chief executive officer of Metropolian Life and affiliated companies. The featured speaker is Franklin A. Thomas, president and chief executive officer of the Ford Foundation.

Sponsors' tables of ten are $5,000; patrons' tables of ten are $2,000; individual tickets are $200. Reservations may be made by calling the Joint Center at 202-626-3555.

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